

Claims:

1. A method for affording guidance in bringing an aircraft or other vehicle to a defined position in a docking station, wherein a horizontal indicator fixed relative to the docking station is viewed along an inclined line of sight from the vehicle against a background that includes a horizontal datum which is spaced at a distance behind the horizontal indicator, manoeuvre of the vehicle towards the docking station reducing visually the vertical separation between the horizontal indicator and the horizontal datum until they are visually aligned with one another when the vehicle is located in said defined position in the docking station.
2. A method according to Claim 1 wherein the background is provided by an array of vertical columns and horizontal rows of light sources, and wherein the light sources of a horizontal row of the array are energised to define the horizontal datum.
3. A method according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 wherein the horizontal indicator is defined by energised light sources.
4. A method according to Claim 2 or Claim 3 wherein the light sources are light-emitting diodes.
5. A method according to any one of Claims 1 to 4 wherein a vertical indicator is located with the horizontal indicator and the background includes a vertical datum that is spaced at said distance behind the horizontal and vertical indicators, the method including viewing the vertical and horizontal indicators along the inclined line of sight against the vertical and horizontal datums of the background, manoeuvre of the vehicle towards and into an alignment with the docking station reducing visually both the vertical separation between the horizontal indicator and the horizontal datum as aforesaid, and the horizontal separation between the vertical indicator and the vertical datum.

6. A method according to Claim 5 wherein the vertical indicator is defined by energised light sources.
7. A method according to Claim 6 wherein the light sources of the vertical indicator are light-emitting diodes.
8. A method according to any one of Claims 5 to 7 wherein the background is provided by an array of vertical columns and horizontal rows of light sources, and wherein at least some of the light sources of two spaced columns of the array are energised to define the vertical datum.
9. A method according to Claim 8 wherein the two columns lie within a pair of baffle-screens such that according to deviation of the vehicle to one side or the other out of the alignment with the docking station, one or other of the columns is obscured by the baffle-screens from view along the line of sight.
10. A method according to Claim 9 wherein two further columns of the array which lie outside the pair of baffle-screens are obscured by the baffle-screens from view along the line of sight while the vehicle is in said alignment with the docking station, and one or the other of the two further columns come into view along the line of sight in dependence upon the extent of deviation of the vehicle to the left or right respectively from that alignment.
11. Apparatus for affording guidance in bringing an aircraft or other vehicle to a defined position in a docking station, comprising a horizontal indicator fixed relative to the docking station and a horizontal datum spaced at a distance behind the horizontal indicator such that when the horizontal indicator is viewed along an inclined line of sight from the vehicle against a background that includes the horizontal datum, manoeuvre of the vehicle towards the docking station reduces visually the vertical separation between the horizontal indicator and the horizontal datum until they are visually aligned with one another when the vehicle is located in said defined position in the docking station.

12. Apparatus according to Claim 11 wherein the background is provided by an array of vertical columns and horizontal rows of light sources, and wherein the apparatus includes means for selecting a row of the array, and means for energising the light sources of the selected row to define the horizontal datum.

13. Apparatus according to Claim 11 or Claim 12 wherein the horizontal indicator is defined by light sources.

14. Apparatus according to Claim 12 or Claim 13 wherein the light sources are light-emitting diodes.

15. Apparatus according to any one of Claims 11 to 14 wherein a vertical indicator is located with the horizontal indicator and the background includes a vertical datum that is spaced at said distance behind the horizontal and vertical indicators such that when the vertical and horizontal indicators are viewed along the inclined line of sight against the vertical and horizontal datums of the background, manoeuvre of the vehicle towards and in alignment with the docking station reduces visually both the vertical separation between the horizontal indicator and the horizontal datum as aforesaid, and the horizontal separation between the vertical indicator and the vertical datum.

16. Apparatus according to Claim 15 wherein the vertical indicator is defined by light sources.

17. Apparatus according to Claim 16 wherein the light sources of the vertical indicator are light-emitting diodes.

18. Apparatus according to any one of Claims 15 to 17 wherein the background is provided by an array of vertical columns and horizontal rows of light sources, and wherein at least some of the light sources of two spaced columns of the array are energised to define the vertical datum.

19. Apparatus according to Claim 18 wherein the two columns lie within a pair of baffle-screens such that according to deviation of the vehicle to one side or the other out of the alignment with the docking station, one or other of the columns is obscured by the baffle-screens from view along the line of sight.

20. Apparatus according to Claim 19 wherein two further columns of the array which lie outside the pair of baffle-screens are obscured by the baffle-screens from view along the line of sight while the vehicle is in said alignment with the docking station, and one or the other of the two further columns come into view along the line of sight in dependence upon the extent of deviation of the vehicle to the left or right respectively from that alignment.